

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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AREA BOCES AWARDED \$400,000 DISTANCE LEARNING GRANT

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that the Schuyler-Chemung-Tioga Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) has been awarded a grant of \$400,998 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS). The grant was made through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) program.

"This grant will improve learning and teaching technology for rural residents in Tioga County as well as in Schuyler and Chemung," said Hinchey. "It's very much in keeping with the mission of the Rural Utilities Service and the Tioga REAP."

BOCES will use the grant to equip distance-learning classrooms with internet-based video conferencing and other multi-media resources. With the installation of this equipment and implementation of the services provided in this grant, students will have the opportunity to utilize the resources of neighboring school districts and higher education institutions. They will be able to participate in "virtual" field trips to museums, zoos, medical facilities and science centers. Teachers will have expanded access to certification courses, graduate level coursework, seminars and conferences without having to leave the school district.

This project will supplement the activities that the schools have been losing due to budget constraints and will open new doors for education. It will provide enhanced educational opportunities for 5,400 students.

"We are thrilled to win this award," said C. Thomas Bailey, Superintendent of Schools for the Spencer-Van Etten Central School District. "It will allow us to offer residents in our area access to cutting edge technology and extend and improve the reach of our educational programming to public schools and BOCES classrooms throughout the Central Southern Tier. We are grateful to USDA, the Tioga REAP, and Congressman Hinchey for recognizing the vast potential of this initiative."

The grant application's endorsement from the Tioga Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) was instrumental in securing its approval. The Tioga REAP was created in 1999 through an agreement between Hinchey, the Secretary of Agriculture, and local leaders to assist the area in community development. As a REAP-endorsed project, the grant application received discretionary points in the highly competitive selection process.